

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 02064 251257Z

64

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

/064 W

----- 034705

R 251211Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3013

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL/CAN THO 2542

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

CINCPAC

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2064

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: ARCHBISHOP REITERATES BAN AGAINST POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN
CHURCHES

1. CHINH LUAN NEWSPAPER OF FEB 22 IN LEAD STORY REPORTED THAT
SAIGON ARCHBISHOP NGUYEN VAN BINH HAS REQUESTED PASTORS OF SOME
12 SAIGON PARISHES NOT TO CONVENE POLITICAL MEETINGS ON CHURCH
PREMISES. PAPER NOTES THAT BINH'S ACTION COMES AT TIME OF
PREPARATIONS BY PACM FOR A WEEK OF "STRUGGLE FOR PRESS FREEDOM".

2. ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE TOLD US FEB 24 THAT BINH IN FACT HAD
SENT LETTER TO PASTOR OF XOM MOI PARISH IN SAIGON REMINDING HIM
OF STANDING INJUNCTION AGAINST USING CHURCHES FOR PURELY POLITICAL
PURPOSES. XOM MOI WAS PARISH PACM HAD CHOSEN FOR FIRST OF FOUR
SCHEDULED PUBLIC MEETINGS ON SUBJECT OF PRESS FREEDOM IN WAKE
OF ARRESTS OF 18 NEWSMEN AND SHUTDOWNS OF FIVE PAPERS.

3. ALTHOUGH XOM MOI MEETING WAS DULY CANCELLED FOLLOWING
ARCHBISHOP'S REPORTED COMMUNICATION WITH PASTOR THERE, NEXT
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TWO MEETINGS IN SERIES WERE HELD, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST -

ACCORDING TO CHINH LUAN - TOOK PLACE AT TAN CHI LINH
CONFERENCE HALL RATHER THAN IN CHURCH. (COMMENT: THIS WAS
LARGELY MEANINGLESS GESTURE ON PACM'S PART, SINCE PACM HAS USED
TAN CHI LINH CONFERENCE HALL IN PAST AND PROBABLY PREFERS IT TO
CHURCH FOR SUCH GATHERINGS. BOTH ARE IN SAME COMPOUND. END COMMENT)
THUS, PACM ALTHOUGH WELL AWARE OF BINH'S DESIRES, SEEMS TO HAVE
DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH PREVIOUSLY-FORMULATED PLANS.

4. COMMENT: WHETHER PACM ACTION WILL PROVOKE REACTION FROM
ARCHBISHOP IS UNKNOWN. BINH IS OUT OF TOWN UNTIL FEB 29.
MARTIN

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NNN

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